

relief, vowing to repeal the Bush tax cuts. News coverage painted the picture of a Nation questioning the value of tax relief. In a July 28 Washington Post column entitled, "Democrats Not Shying Away From Tax Talk: Candidates Discuss Raises, Not Cuts," of two of those candidates, both called for repeal of the cuts, a move The Washington Post notes would raise tax rates for all income taxpayers; reinstate the marriage penalty on joint filers, and shrivel the popular child tax credit for middle-income tax payers.

The article says that the Democratic tax increases would be used to provide universal health coverage and to rev up the economy. They actually believe raising taxes would rev up the economy.

Moving on down the line, two Senators, Senator KERRY and Senator LIEBERMAN, are on record suggesting raising some income tax brackets to pre-Bush levels. Senator EDWARDS called for raising some income tax brackets, and once again treating dividends as taxable income. Under his leadership, he would not only increase the newly lowered 15 percent capital gains rate; he would increase it to a whopping 25 percent.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Democratic leadership's primary economic policy can be summed up in 2 words: tax increases.

Fortunately, August must have been a painful month for those who lept on the tax increase bandwagon because today economists are finally giving credit to the President and the Republicans in Congress for passing tax relief and fueling economic growth. Tax relief, not tax increases, have revved up the economy. Critics of the tax relief legislation must be shocked to see that lower taxes are providing stimulus.

Today we see a stock market on the rise. The NASDAQ closed at a 17-month high. The Dow and the S&P 500 ended today at 15-month highs.

The headlines are revealing: "Manufacturing Index at an 8-Month High." "Chain Store Sales Rise."

"Construction Spending Inches Up."

"U.S. Growth Tops Forecasts."

"Fed Says Economy Shows Gains."

"Consumer Confidence Rises."

Mr. Speaker, the GDP, the broadest measure of the Nation's economy, grew at 3.1 percent in the quarter. That is up 1.4 percent in previous quarters.

Clearly, the signs are good and clearly the tax cuts are working. Now, there are sure to be some bumps in the road, but the facts are that relief is doing exactly what we said it would.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on one other subject, a subject that our majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), came to the floor and talked about earlier today. He reaffirmed our commitment to control government spending, and I want to thank him for doing that. He knows that we provided tax relief to stimulate the economy, that we have attacked terrorism at its root and taken steps to

improve the quality of life for our troops.

Now is the time to direct attention to wasteful spending. Our freshman class has made its mission working on eliminating government waste, fraud and abuse. The momentum for true reform and reductions in spending are there. We have proved that tax cuts work, and we have the trust of the American People.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

CONCERNS OVER IRAQI WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, those of us who have taken an oath of office to serve the American people welcome the opportunity to come back to the United States Congress and to be able to help guide this Nation as we move into the 21st century.

A lot of activity has taken place over the August work recess; and I believe, Mr. Speaker, it warrants commentary and it warrants action.

More than 6 months ago as we looked to the future, and more than that time frame when we debated the question of war and peace as it relates to Iraq, there were many of us who vigorously opposed the administration's war in Iraq. We argued for a constitutional vote on this floor, to vote war up or down. As that was overridden and the President decided unilaterally to go to war and ignore the United Nations and NATO allies and others, we continue to suggest that following this war, recognizing and appreciating the greatness of those young men and women willing to offer themselves and sacrifice themselves for the principles of this Nation, that we should design an aftermath to Iraq.

We began to deliberate and to discuss how should we, in fact, secure Iraq; how should we, in fact, provide safety to the people, to provide peace to the people, democratization to the people, and certainly provide the protection to our young men and women on the ground. Unfortunately, this administration decided to go it alone. And lo

and behold, though we wish not to be able to say that this evening, all we can say is, I told you so.

We find in the papers of the last couple of days terrible atrocities. One, for example, is that there are bomb incidents almost every day. Might I say to the U.N., United Nations family, my deepest sympathy for the tragic loss of those who are on the ground for humanitarian purposes. We are also offering our deepest sympathy to the families who have lost their young men and women on the front lines and, yes, those lives that will continue to be lost.

We find out by recent reports in newspapers that a congressional study shows that the Army lacks the active duty troops to keep the current occupation force in Iraq past March of 2004 without getting extra help from either other services and reserves or other nations. It was not too long ago when we said to the administration, it is imperative that if you fought the war alone, then you clearly need to keep the peace in the multi-lateral posture with the United Nations, with NATO allies and even with allies from the Arab region. Being in the Arab region, in the Medius region in April, it was clear that our Arab nations wanted to participate in the peace, our friends in India wanted to participate in the peace. But were they asked? No.

As the President moves for a U.N. Security Council resolution, tentative as it is, I believe it is time for the President of the United States to take to the bully pulpit and restore the value to the United Nations, restore our friendship with the United Nations, and begin to put together before the U.N. Security Council a sincere effort, a sincere offering that we would like to collaborate in building the peace. There is no shame in working with friends or collaborating. There is no shame in promoting the United Nations, the very entity upon which we built after World War II in order to generate a forum that nations could come together and fight for peace as opposed to war. But yet this administration turned its back on a vehicle that could be helpful; and now here we come back, suggesting that we would like our friends to donate troops and money. Well, we cannot get that kind of action unless you show true sincerity.

To the President I say that this report is worse than we would like. Released on Tuesday by a nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, it said that if the Pentagon sticks to its plan of rotating active duty Army troops out of Iraq after a year, it will only be able to sustain a force of 67,000 to 106,000 using active duty and reserve and Marine forces.

We need help and there is no shame in that. I hope that the President will gather his thoughts and go to the United Nations in a collaborative way, not in an undermining way, not in undermining troops. I frankly support the

ideas of the United Nations' effort led by the leadership of the United States military. We have the facts. We are on the ground. We know the facts.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is shameful to note that we have lost more soldiers than when it was announced that the war was over. I think it is shameful that when those soldiers die we are ignoring the fact that we have, in fact, lost our wounded, over 1,104, and that there are wounded individuals every single day that go unreported because of the fact that we are only reporting those who have died.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, let me simply say the poverty rate is going up. We, frankly, need to do this together, keeping the peace, providing for the peace. We will need world friends. It is time now for us to design an aftermath that will provide for democracy and safety in Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DOGGETT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STRICKLAND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOFFEL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, the House is back in session this week. And on the first evening back in session, we are resuming the Iraq Watch.

This is an effort that has been going on since late in the spring, primarily by four of us here on the floor of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE), and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL), to raise questions about our poli-

cies in Iraq, to suggest corrections in those policies, to ask questions about the diplomacies leading up to military action, to ask questions about the intelligence relating to weapons of mass destruction, the use of that intelligence, the presence and whereabouts and the custody of those weapons of mass destruction, fundamentally questions about whether we are winning the peace and what exit strategy we have and when we will turn Iraq back to the Iraqis.

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I know my colleagues have a lot of things to say tonight because a lot has been happening since we were last in session, and much of it bad, in Iraq, and we all have our own focus we would like to put on the debate this evening.

I am going to open up and ask some questions focused on the fundamental issue of credibility, and I am then going to turn to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) who has a conflicting time commitment, if my colleagues will agree, for the points that he would like to make in just a few minutes.

There are so many unanswered questions about credibility relating to our actions in Iraq. Why did the White House press the CIA to approve misleading language in the State of the Union, suggesting that Hussein was uranium shopping throughout Africa, when the White House knew that that information was not accurate? Why did the administration hype alleged strong ties between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, although those ties have never been established? Why did the White House exaggerate the threat of the weapons of mass destruction themselves and hype both the nature of those weapons and the urgency of the danger caused by those weapons?

The real threat that I see posed by Hussein, who was clearly a murderous tyrant who used weapons of mass destruction in the past against innocent civilians, the real threat was his potential to restart those weapons of mass destruction programs, including the ability and perhaps the desire on his part to restart or even purchase nuclear weapons if the international community lost its focus, if the focus and pressure for resumption of international inspections were to have been set aside, or if sanctions were lifted or if we simply lost interest. That was the threat from Saddam Hussein.

Why did President Bush not stick to that? Why did he exaggerate the threat caused by weapons of mass destruction and these other alleged ties that have not come to pass? We know now that these claims by the administration were exaggerated.

Last fall, in the lead-up to the congressional vote, the administration publicly and privately stated with complete certainty that Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, that he was seeking more; that his chemical and biological and nuclear programs were

well underway; that there were ties between al Qaeda and Hussein; that he had these weapons, he was trying to get more and he was likely to give them away to terrorists. Now we know from declassified intelligence documents that at this very same time the administration was being told by our intelligence agencies that there was a great deal of uncertainty about the status of the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

The Defense Intelligence Agency report of September 2002 and the national intelligence estimate of October 2002 raised serious doubts about this, used phrases like no credible evidence of an Iraqi chemical weapon program. Yet the administration publicly and privately said it is a sure thing, we count on it, we have got to stop it.

Does this matter? Maybe this is the question that we need to address. Does this pattern of deception matter? Do the ends not justify the means? Should we not all be rejoicing that Saddam Hussein is out of power?

I think this pattern of deception does matter because the administration's credibility is shot as a result of this, and when the administration's credibility is shot, our national credibility is threatened. It matters when a government uses deception to try to achieve its goals because that deception can become a habit. It can be habit forming and we reach a point where the government loses its credibility and its moral stature.

The administration oversold the need for war. They oversold the prospects of winning the peace. They oversimplified the challenge of bringing liberty and democracy to Iraq, all the while insisting that we could do this on our own unilaterally, without the help of our traditional alliance, the Western alliances, and in the international community, willingly proclaiming all this time that the U.S. and Britain should be known as the occupying powers, the occupying powers in Iraq, and ignoring the international institutions and the assets they can bring to bear to help a people become a free people and develop democratic institutions. It is time for the administration to level with the American people, to stop this pattern of deception that undermines the work we are trying to achieve.

The President should answer seven questions. The first is he should tell us how long the military occupation is going to take, how long will it last.

Secondly, how much will the military occupation cost? The current estimates are \$1 billion a week, \$4 billion a month, to maintain our military occupation.

Thirdly, how long is the reconstruction going to take?

Fourthly, how much will that cost? Most estimates I have seen, \$20 billion a year for at least 5 years. That is \$100 billion to reconstruct Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOFFEL. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.